UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
54th meeting
held on
Monday, 8 March 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 54th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 153: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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4 August 1993

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 153: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN MOZAMBIQUE (A/47/881/Add.1 and 896)

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the General Assembly had decided, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, to include in the agenda of its forty-seventh session an additional item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee as agenda item 153. In that connection, he drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/881/Add.1) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/47/896), which were before the Committee.

2. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing document A/47/896, said that the Security Council, by its resolution 797 (1992) of 16 December 1992, had decided to establish the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) for a period until 31 October 1993. Document A/47/881/Add.1 contained proposals for the financing of ONUMOZ. As explained in the reports submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary-General, particularly document S/24892, the overall framework and operational plan for ONUMOZ had four components - political, military, electoral and humanitarian. The functions to be carried out in accordance with those four aspects were summarized in paragraph 13 of the Secretary-General's report.

3. For the military component, the Secretary-General was requesting funds to cover 354 military observers and 6,625 troops, including five infantry battalions. For the civilian component, the Secretary-General estimated that the United Nations would require 861 civilians. In addition, for the three-week period during the election phase, 1,200 international observers and 1,200 local staff would be required. The financial requirement for the period 15 October 1992 to 31 October 1993 had been estimated at $264,090,700 gross or $259,712,000 net.

4. As indicated in paragraph 8 of its report, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had been ready to consider the estimates in great detail; it had, however, been informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that a number of elements of the operational plan were out of date. The representatives of the Secretary-General had also indicated that by the time the United Nations established itself in Mozambique, as required by the General Peace Agreement which had entered into force on 15 October 1992, the implementation of the various schedules, as provided for in the Agreement, would also be delayed. It was in recognition of the time constraint placed on the United Nations by the Agreement that the Security Council, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 797 (1992), had invited the Secretary-General to consult closely with all the parties on a precise timing of and preparations for the presidential and legislative elections as well as

on the precise timetable for the implementation of the other major aspects of the Agreement and to report back to the Council on that as soon as possible, and in any event not later than 31 March 1993.

5. After careful consideration of the best manner in which to proceed and on the basis of the additional information provided by the representatives of the Secretary-General, the Advisory Committee had decided to submit an interim recommendation to the General Assembly. The rationale for the procedure adopted by the Advisory Committee was explained in paragraph 12 of document A/47/896. The Advisory Committee's proposals should also enable the United Nations to commence the various operations of ONUMOZ and, in particular, those relating to the military, political and humanitarian aspects, pending the submission and consideration of the report requested by the Security Council.

6. As stated in paragraph 11 of its report, the Advisory Committee had requested, and had subsequently received from representatives of the Secretary-General information on cost estimates for the period until 30 June 1993, taking into account delays in the phasing-in of military and civilian personnel. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee was recommending that an amount of $140 million should be appropriated and assessed for the period 15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993.

7. In that connection, he drew the attention of all concerned, especially the Secretariat, to paragraphs 13 to 17 of the Advisory Committee's report. Those paragraphs contained a number of requests, including the request that a report should be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Advisory Committee by 1 July 1993 so as to enable the Advisory Committee to submit detailed recommendations on the total financing of ONUMOZ. The Advisory Committee hoped that that report would be submitted in a timely manner. In paragraph 16, the Advisory Committee commented on the problem of delays in the submission of the ONUMOZ financing report. The Advisory Committee trusted that that problem would be addressed seriously by all concerned units of the Secretariat.

8. Mr. AFONSO (Mozambique) said that the signing at Rome on 4 October 1992 of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique had been the culmination of two years of negotiations aimed at settling the conflict which had ravaged the country for 17 years. The Agreement had put an end to the wave of violence and had ushered in a new era of peace, harmony and understanding among all Mozambicans. His delegation appealed for greater efforts at all levels to ensure the immediate, effective and full implementation of the Agreement, which would be the first step towards the promotion of development, democracy and national reconciliation in the country.

9. During the past five months, progress had been made in the implementation of the Agreement. All the institutional mechanisms envisaged by the Agreement were now in place. Military observers were arriving in Mozambique and had commenced their activities. A donors' conference for Mozambique had been held

(Mr. Afonso, Mozambique)

in Rome with encouraging results, including the decision to establish a United Nations trust fund for humanitarian assistance to Mozambique.

10. Despite those important developments, his delegation believed that the effective deployment of an adequate number of United Nations peace-keeping forces in the country was urgently required. The spirit of goodwill and cooperation so far displayed by all parties, in accordance with the noble goals outlined in the Agreement, could not be undermined at such a critical juncture by the lack of resolute action on the part of the international community and, in particular, the United Nations. Although the cease-fire had held for nearly six months without a meaningful United Nations presence on the ground, thus testifying to the parties' commitment to abide by the provisions of the Agreement, it was necessary to allocate the resources required to make the peace process irreversible. In addition to the military dimension, the electoral, humanitarian and other aspects of ONUMOZ also required adequate resources.

11. In the interests of greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness, his delegation welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 13 of its report that the Secretariat should make every reasonable effort to acquire services, resources and materials from local and area sources. Lastly, it was to be hoped that the Fifth Committee would adopt by consensus the recommendation contained in paragraph 14 of the Advisory Committee's report.

12. Ms. RIGGELSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Community, said that those countries greatly regretted the time which had elapsed between the Security Council's establishment of ONUMOZ and the submission of the Secretariat's budget proposal. Two months was too long a period, especially when it was a question of an operation urgently called for by all parties concerned.

13. The unacceptable delays in the planning phase of the operation again highlighted the need for better coordination and a clearer command structure within the Secretariat. The European Community reaffirmed its view that the structure of the peace-keeping units within the Secretariat should be reviewed so as to enable the Secretariat to cope with the increasing number of peace-keeping operations and their growing complexity. Contrary to what was sometimes alleged, the General Assembly had taken prompt action in the recent past on the financing of peace-keeping operations. The States on whose behalf she spoke could not agree that the delays in the approval of budgets for peace-keeping operations established by the Security Council were attributable to the Assembly.

14. The European Community was seriously concerned at the lack of substance in document A/47/881/Add.1. A budget should be a natural reflection of an operational plan. Despite frequent criticisms by the Advisory Committee of the poor quality of the information provided in financing proposals for peace-keeping operations, their timeliness and content had not yet improved.

(Ms. Riggelsen, Denmark)

15. Earlier in the session, the European Community had stated in the Fifth Committee that, in view of the very substantial sums of money involved, the Committee should devote more time in the future to the consideration of budget estimates for peace-keeping operations. During the current resumed session, however, less than four days would be allocated to the consideration of four accounts, which was an unreasonably short period.

16. The draft resolutions which were currently before the Fifth Committee were all based on the principle of collective responsibility. In accordance with Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations, the costs of peace-keeping operations were expenses of the Organization, to be borne by Member States. The financing of the Bosnia and Herzegovina command of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), however, constituted a regrettable exception to that rule, one which the Community hoped would be remedied shortly. The States members of the European Community would appreciate information concerning the actions already taken and envisaged by the Secretary-General to ensure more effective planning of peace-keeping operations, the improvement of budgetary information and presentation, and a review of current procedures to enable the proper and timely launching of such missions in a cost-effective and efficient manner, as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

17. Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe) welcomed the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, which would end a conflict that had affected the entire southern African region, including Zimbabwe. He also welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General, pursuant to Security Council resolution 782 (1992), of an interim Special Representative. Despite enormous odds, the interim Special Representative had managed to work with both the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO in implementing the Agreement and the fact that the cease-fire was still holding, although ONUMOZ had not yet been fully deployed, was a tribute to the parties to the conflict, who were cooperating to ensure the restoration of peace in that war-ravaged country.

18. He welcomed the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General (A/47/881/Add.1), which spelt out the financial implications of deploying ONUMOZ. The magnitude and complexity of the responsibilities entrusted to the Organization under the Agreement required the involvement of the international community as a whole. A massive injection of humanitarian assistance would be needed for the resettlement of returnees and for reconstruction.

19. Zimbabwe was committed to seeing the peace process in Mozambique succeed and was therefore concerned about the Organization's delay in sending troops, despite the authorization of the Security Council. His delegation hoped that the operation would be shortly consolidated and, in that connection, supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the General Assembly should appropriate and assess for ONUMOZ a lump sum of $140 million to ensure the rapid deployment of the operation. The Advisory Committee's report also stressed the importance of reducing costs, especially at a time when the

(Mr. Sengwe, Zimbabwe)

Organization's resources were being stretched to the limit by its numerous peace-keeping operations all over the world. It should be emphasized, however, that there was no price tag on peace. The situation in Mozambique was a difficult one which required an exceptional response.

20. Finally, he noted the Advisory Committee's view that every reasonable effort should be made by the Secretariat to acquire services, resources and materials from local and area sources. His delegation would welcome information from the Secretariat concerning the action taken to save the Organization's meagre resources in the deployment of United Nations operations in general and of ONUMOZ in particular.

21. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) said that, after many years of an unspeakably violent war and the worst drought in many decades, the people of Mozambique were finally starting to enjoy the peace they so much deserved. The approach outlined by the Secretary-General in his report (S/24642) and endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 797 (1992) that the electoral process should go hand in hand with the restriction of the warring factions to designated bases and their disarmament was likely to avert the difficulties which other peace processes had encountered. Indeed the peace-keeping operation in Mozambique enjoyed unusually good prospects for success. The cease-fire had been holding since October 1992, even though the bulk of the military component of ONUMOZ was yet to be deployed. The end of the drought would also help to ease the humanitarian plight of the population. He wished to caution, however, against the possibility of Mozambique being victimized by its success. The scarce resources of the Organization were also needed in other trouble spots. Nevertheless, peace was priceless, particularly since the Mozambican parties had consistently shown their readiness to honour their commitments.

22. The report of ACABQ provided the Committee with updated information on the deployment of ONUMOZ. Regrettably, the report of the Secretary-General on the operational plan of ONUMOZ had been overtaken by recent developments. ACABQ and the General Assembly were thus being called upon to act on an important matter without having all the necessary information at their disposal. For that reason, the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the General Assembly, at the current stage, should appropriate and assess for ONUMOZ a lump sum of $140 million in order to ensure the rapid deployment of the operation was a wise one which offered a way out of a very complex situation. His delegation concurred with the recommendation of ACABQ on the understanding that the Secretariat might return to the General Assembly if the lump sum amount proved insufficient to meet the high start-up and maintenance costs of the operation. It also concurred with the Advisory Committee's request to the Secretariat that the revised and detailed cost estimates for the entire mandate period of ONUMOZ should be made available by 1 July 1993.

23. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that he fully supported the recommendation of ACABQ that a lump sum of $140 million should be appropriated for ONUMOZ for the period

(Mr. Francis, Australia)

15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993 to allow the Secretariat additional time to submit detailed cost estimates for the full mandate period. ACABQ had responded with commendable flexibility to an urgent and difficult situation. The failure on the part of the Secretariat to submit a detailed funding request prompted justifiable criticism from ACABQ on the Secretariat's procedures for the planning and implementation of peace-keeping operations.

24. While he welcomed its establishment, the new Department of Peace-keeping Operations did not have sufficient resources to proactively plan new peace-keeping missions and to manage and coordinate existing ones. In his view, that was the most pressing problem as well as the root cause of many others. It was no surprise, therefore, to read in the recent report of the outgoing head of the Department of Administration and Management that the ranks of those engaged in peace-keeping in the Secretariat needed to be dramatically increased and that a significant overhaul of infrastructure was needed. The report noted that the United Nations was still doing its peace-keeping as though it were business as usual.

25. The need for additional resources in the area of peace-keeping should not, however, be addressed in an ad hoc manner, as was currently the case. The operational aspects of United Nations peace-keeping needed a comprehensive and systematic review and the functions of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Field Operations Division needed to be more clearly defined. After that was done, the required resources should be quantified and allocated.

26. The Secretary-General must ensure that peace-keeping operations were planned and implemented in a timely and effective manner. In that regard, it might be helpful for the Committee to have the opportunity to examine the report of the review team which had been asked by the previous Secretary-General to conduct a review of the planning and management of peace-keeping operations and other similar missions.

27. He noted that some additional information had been made available to ACABQ during its consideration of the item of the financing of ONUMOZ. He would welcome an explanation from the Secretariat as to when that additional data would be made available to the Committee to permit it quickly to advance in its own consideration of the item.

28. With regard to the start-up funding for ONUMOZ, he was pleased to note that $9.5 million from the peace-keeping reserve fund had been earmarked for start-up costs. He also noted, however, that $32.9 million had been loaned to ongoing peace-keeping operations. He understood, further, that since the preparation of the report, additional sums had been loaned to ongoing peace-keeping operations and that the uncommitted or unspent balance in the reserve fund was currently only $5.6 million. He would appreciate an updated report from the Secretariat on exactly how much was currently on loan to ongoing operations, what were those operations, how much of the balance was committed and to which operations. Such loans could seriously undermine the

(Mr. Francis, Australia)

central purpose of the fund, which was intended as a special-purpose account for financing the start-up of new operations. At a time when the Organization was about to launch in Somalia one of its largest operations, the peace-keeping reserve fund had only $5.6 million to meet start-up costs. It would be interesting to hear how the Secretariat proposed to deal with the start-up costs for that operation. He would be particularly discouraged if the loans made from the peace-keeping reserve fund served to discourage prompt payment of assessments to individual peace-keeping accounts.

29. The current state of the peace-keeping reserve fund did more than illustrate that it was not being used for the priority activity for which it was intended. It also demonstrated that the establishment of the fund was no more than a first, albeit important, step in the continuing process of review and reform of peace-keeping financing.

30. Ms. ROEDSMOEN (Norway), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, said that the Nordic countries firmly supported the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations, including the new operation in Mozambique. They therefore supported the recommendation of ACABQ that a lump sum of $140 million should be appropriated for ONUMOZ for the period 15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993.

31. The Nordic countries also shared the concern expressed by ACABQ over the unsatisfactory budget procedures of the operation. Member States were being called upon to contribute ever-increasing amounts to peace-keeping operations and they should therefore be assured tht the financial requirements were fully justified. A lump sum approach, without detailed consideration by the appropriate advisory bodies, was not a satisfactory procedure for Member States.

32. She was fully aware of the difficulties of presenting realistic budget estimates for peace-keeping operations. Indeed, the urgency, unpredictability and growing complexity of the operations made budgeting and initial planning challenging tasks. Nevertheless, the Nordic countries supported the view of the Advisory Committee that the Secretariat's procedures for the planning and implementation of peace-keeping operations should be improved and called upon the Secretary-General to take urgent measures for better coordination, both within the Secretariat and system-wide. The Secretary-General should also ensure more effective planning of peace-keeping operations and review the current procedures to enable the proper and timely launching of such missions in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

33. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that her delegation attached great importance to the effective implementation of the mandate of ONUMOZ, which must be done on a sound financial basis. She therefore regretted the delay in planning for the operation and the lack of sufficient information on the question of its funding. The cost estimates provided by the Secretary-General did not permit members to assess fully the financial needs of the operation

(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

and it would therefore be helpful if additional information were provided to the Committee.

34. Her delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations contained in paragraph 16 of its report (A/47/896) as well as its recommendation that the General Assembly should appropriate for ONUMOZ a lump sum of $140 million for the period 15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993. Finally, it looked forward to the revised and detailed cost estimates for ONUMOZ for the entire mandate period, which the Secretary-General was requested to submit by 1 July 1993.

35. Mr. SY (Senegal) said that his country welcomed the historic signing of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, which gave some hope at last to the long-suffering people of that country. The situation in Mozambique remained critical, however, and any delay in the start-up of the peace-keeping operation would have serious consequences.

36. The report of the Advisory Committee, which called attention to the delays in the launching of the operation, was a responsible one. Nevertheless, in recommending the appropriation of a lump sum of $140 million to ensure the rapid deployment of the operation, while awaiting the revised and detailed cost estimates, ACABQ had demonstrated commendable flexibility. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's position that the recommended appropriation was an exceptional response to an urgent and difficult situation and should not be considered a precedent for future operations.

37. The international community must now assist the people of Mozambique in rebuilding their country and not allow them to become victims of their own success in adhering to the Peace Agreement signed in October 1992. He therefore appealed to the Secretary-General to submit the revised and detailed cost estimates for ONUMOZ for the entire mandate period by 1 July 1993, as requested by the Advisory Committee. For its part, the Committee must leave no stone unturned to reach a consensus on the launching of the operation.

38. Ms. RIGGELSEN (Denmark) asked whether there were any annexes to the budget of ONUMOZ and, if so, if they could be made available to the Committee.

39. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that his delegation, too, regretted the paucity of the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/881/Add.1). The pending review by ACABQ of the question of the format of budgets for peace-keeping operations should not prevent the Secretariat from submitting its revised and detailed cost estimates, as requested by ACABQ. During consideration of cost estimates for other peace-keeping operations, including UNAVEM, ONUSAL and UNTAG, the Fifth Committee had repeatedly requested the Secretary-General to improve the format of the respective budgets. He hoped that the Committee's recommendations would be implemented without awaiting the outcome of the discussions in ACABQ on the matter.

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

40. In paragraph 11 of its report on the financing of ONUMOZ (A/47/896), ACABQ indicated that it had requested information on cost estimates for the period until 30 June 1993. That information was an important element in helping the Committee to decide on the appropriateness of the lump sum of $140 million and could also help to restore confidence in the budgetary process currently under way. The Fifth Committee could not give carte blanche to the Secretariat and his delegation wished to join the Advisory Committee in stressing that the recommended appropriation was an exceptional response to an urgent and difficult situation and that it should not be considered a precedent for future operations.

41. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller), replying to the question asked by the representative of Denmark, said that the annexes to the ONUMOZ budget would shortly be made available to the Fifth Committee in one of the working languages of the Organization.

42. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he had also the additional information submitted to the Advisory Committee that was referred to in paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's report on ONUMOZ (A/47/881/Add.1).

43. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that it would be a departure from normal practice to provide the Committee with the information in question. If information was requested in the course of the informal consultations on ONUMOZ, the Secretariat would, as far as possible, provide it. The Committee could then revert to the question in the context of its overall consideration of the question of the financing of peace-keeping operations.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

44. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the Committee's programme of work for 8 to 12 March 1993, which had been circulated on 5 March 1993 at the informal consultations on the programme of work for the resumed session. He understood that the Working Group had informally agreed to the tentative programme of work for the current week.

45. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that it was imperative for the Fifth Committee to begin its consideration of the revised budget estimates no later than 29 March 1983. In view of the difficulties relating to that item, the Fifth Committee should begin its discussions prior to the Advisory Committee's consideration of the matter.

46. Ms. RIGGELSEN (Denmark) said that in the informal consultations and at the current meeting her delegation had requested a formal debate on item 124 and had raised a number of specific questions about peace-keeping operations; she wondered whether item 124 could also be taken up during the current week.

47. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) said that in the light of the Advisory Committee's report on ONUMOZ, a debate on item 124 would be very timely and his delegation would be happy to participate in it.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee was to hold informal consultations on item 124 on the afternoon of 11 March 1993, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/218, section II. He would prefer to keep that meeting so as to comply with the resolution. Item 124 could be considered on the morning of 12 March as the third item of business. Item 147 could then be taken up on the afternoon of 31 March as the third item: that would give the Secretariat time to respond to the questions of delegations.

49. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said the delegations would need background documentation if there was to be a formal debate on items 124 and 147.

50. Mr. BOIN (France) said that if a formal debate was held on item 124, informal consultations would also be needed, and it might be necessary to prepare an additional draft resolution.

51. Mr. RAE (India) said that the suggestion that there should be a formal debate on item 124 was very important, but would also involve a great deal of preparation, and adequate documentation would be needed. He wondered whether it would be possible to accommodate such a substantive issue at the resumed session.

52. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) said that his delegation fully supported the request made by the representative of Denmark. The Committee needed to consider the substantive difficulties and try to find solutions. Like the representative of India, he wondered whether it would be possible to hold a formal debate during the resumed session or whether it would be necessary to have another session in order to consider the matter.

53. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) said that there was no doubt about the importance of item 124. Some of the questions that had been raised went beyond administrative and financial matters and involved political issues. It would therefore be inappropriate to rush to take a decision on the matter. The Committee should first ascertain the views of the Secretariat and reach agreement on what type of information was needed, and when and where it should be discussed. More time was needed to consider those aspects.

54. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) said that the Committee should not speculate on whether the Secretariat would be able to provide information by 12 March, but should ask whether it would be possible.

55. Mr. SY (Senegal) said that all delegations were entitled to participate in any substantive debate on the item, and for that they needed to be prepared and to have the basic documentation. If the Committee needed the documentation, it should be able to request it.

56. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) noted that in General Assembly resolution 47/218, the Secretary-General was invited to continue the strengthening and reform of the Secretariat units dealing with peace-keeping operations. While the Secretariat was not obliged to provide a report, delegations were free to raise any issue of concern to them. In that connection, the Committee should

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

invite the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation to provide the briefing on restructuring which was to have been given at the end of February but had been postponed because of the absence of documentation on the revised programme budget.

57. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that item 124 was a very complex issue which had ramifications affecting the United Nations as a whole. The questions raised by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee and the comments of delegations had related to the process of preparing the budget for peace-keeping operations. It would not be possible for the Secretariat to provide a written report on that question at the resumed session, or to provide an oral response to the questions raised by the representative of Denmark, even if they were limited to aspects relating to the Fifth Committee. However, if the Committee decided to consider item 124 at a formal or informal meeting during the resumed session, the Secretariat would be available to reply to questions as fully as possible and to prepare for a formal debate at a later date.

58. The CHAIRMAN said that inclusion of agenda item 124 in the formal meeting on 12 March would allow delegations to raise formally issues of concern in connection with the financing of peace-keeping operations, to which the Secretariat could then respond in preparation for a subsequent formal debate. Regarding the tentative work programme for the second part of the Committee's resumed session, it might be preferable to wait until the end of the first part, on 12 March, to assess where matters stood.

59. Mr. BIDNY (Russian Federation) said that it might suffice to deal with the question of the financing of peace-keeping operations in the informal consultations on 11 March, at which time questions could be put to the Secretariat for a response. A formal meeting could then be held later.

60. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) wondered whether item 124 had been formally concluded in December.

61. The CHAIRMAN noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 47/218, had requested the convening of an open-ended working group of the Fifth Committee during the forty-seventh session to examine the placement of Member States into the groups for the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses. That matter would be dealt with in the informal consultations on 11 March. His suggestion that item 124 should also be dealt with in a formal meeting the next day was in response to the concerns of Member States. Nevertheless, he was open to other ways of proceeding.

62. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) said that the mandate of the open-ended working group was quite specific, and did not embrace any issues other than the placement of Member States into groups. If the Committee had not concluded its consideration of item 124 a debate could of course be held, but his delegation did not think it appropriate to act on the European Community proposal for the time being.

63. Ms. SHENWICK (United States of America) said that her delegation would see a substantive problem if there was any departure in terms of the allocation of Member States to groups from the position adopted at the most recent formal meeting of the Committee on the matter. With regard to the tentative programme of work, her delegation wished the Committee to consider the questions of the terms of office of United Nations officials and of a code of conduct for such officials.

64. Mr. PENEV (Bulgaria) noted that General Assembly decision 47/467 stated that item 124 should be retained on the agenda of the forty-seventh session.

65. Mr. LADJOUZI (Algeria) agreed that the item was still open and that the open-ended working group had a very specific mandate. The proposal made by the States members of the European Community seemed much broader. If the Committee followed the Chairman's suggestion it would allow time to determine the best way of proceeding.

66. Mr. DUHALT (Mexico) said that the only outstanding issue under agenda item 124 was the grouping of Member States. It seemed now that an effort was being made to reopen issues already settled. If the whole question was reopened without a clear view of the aims and without the relevant documentation confusion would inevitably arise. The question raised by the European Community could be answered by a representative of the Secretary-General without reopening the whole issue.

67. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) agreed that for the Committee to hold a detailed debate on the financing of peace-keeping operations would require appropriate documentation, as well as input by the Advisory Committee.

68. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that the item was still open, but could in any event have been reopened had that not been the case. His delegation supported the Chairman's suggestion regarding how the Committee might proceed. With respect to the second part of the Committee's resumed session, the document on the revised estimates had only just been made available and his delegation would require some time to consider the important issues involved.

69. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would add agenda item 147 to the items to be considered at the formal meeting on Wednesday, 10 March, and would decide then how to proceed with its consideration of item 124.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
55th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 10 March 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 55th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 153: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN MOZAMBIQUE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 117: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 121: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 119: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER GROUP IN CENTRAL AMERICA (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 122: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN EL SALVADOR (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 147: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Final appropriations for 1990-1991 (continued)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m

AGENDA ITEM 153: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN MOZAMBIQUE (continued) (A/47/881/Add.1 and A/47/896; A/C.5/47/L.32)

1. Mrs. EMERSON (Portugal), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.32, said that it was patterned in general on the usual format for draft resolutions on peace-keeping operations. The draft resolution, in paragraph 5, requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council by 31 March 1993, and, in paragraph 6, would have the General Assembly appropriate a lump sum of $140 million, inclusive of an amount of $9.5 million authorized with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee for the period 15 October 1992 to 30 June 1993. The apportionment of that amount among Member States was detailed in paragraph 7. Paragraphs 8 and 9 related to the contributions of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. In paragraph 10 the Secretary-General was requested to submit revised estimates for the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) by 1 July 1993.

2. Part B of the draft resolution raised a number of general concerns in connection with peace-keeping operations relating to the need for the effective planning and timely launching of such missions in a cost-effective manner. She trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.32 without a vote.

4. It was so decided.

5. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution, but had some concern regarding the administration and budgetary planning of ONUMOZ and of other peace-keeping operations. Specifically, the General Assembly had called on the Secretary-General and the Board of Auditors to provide for more extensive external auditing of peace-keeping operations, but the opposite seemed to be happening. For example, in connection with an amount of $36 million relating to El Salvador in 1992, $12,000 had been appropriated for external auditing. In the case of ONUMOZ, involving some $250 million, a mere $15,000 was earmarked for external auditing. He trusted that appropriations in respect of future peace-keeping operations would include adequate provision for external auditing.

6. Mr. SALES (Mozambique) said that his delegation welcomed the prompt action taken on the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 117: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (continued) (A/47/744)

7. The CHAIRMAN said that the General Assembly, in its decision 47/450, had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount of $25,258,800 gross for the maintenance of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for the period ending 28 February 1993. Given the change in the operational plan of UNAVEM II and the need for the Secretariat to revise the Secretary-General's report on the financing of UNAVEM (A/47/744), the Committee was not in a position to act, pending submission of the Secretary-General's revised report and the related report of the Advisory Committee.

8. In order to provide for the continued maintenance of UNAVEM II, he proposed that a commitment authorization in an amount not exceeding $3.5 million gross ($3.4 million net) per month for the period from 1 March 1993 should be provided, subject to the concurrence of the Advisory Committee. The amount concurred in by the Advisory Committee should be assessed on member States in accordance with the scheme set out in the draft resolution on ONUMOZ that the Committee had just recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

9. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that the Committee, which on occasion devoted a considerable amount of time to considering modest appropriations, was now proposing to authorize an amount of some $3.5 million per month in short order. His delegation, for one, had not been aware of the amount before the meeting, and needed time to reflect. A related issue was when the Secretary-General intended to issue assessment letters, and how that could mesh with national budget cycles. He had no desire to hinder the Committee in its work, but time was clearly available, given which a decision should be deferred.

10. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that it appeared that the Committee had little alternative to the course proposed by the Chairman, but his delegation was concerned by the way in which the Committee was proceeding. The need to issue revised estimates within an uncertain time-frame inevitably caused delay. He hoped that the Secretariat would inform the Committee when it expected to issue the revised budgetary proposal, an element which should be included in any decision taken by the Committee.

11. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that it appeared that the Committee was being asked to sign a blank cheque with an assurance that a budget for the operation would be provided later. That was not a satisfactory approach. His delegation wanted to know how the amount stated by the Chairman had been determined and when revised estimates would be made available. Perhaps it would be possible to extend financing of the operation for one month to give sufficient time to prepare the revised estimates, but he could not support open-ended funding without a precise indication of what was actually needed.

12. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that the Committee should allow the Secretariat time to produce the information required.

13. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that expenditure up to the end of February was currently authorized, and that the Committee was now being asked to give an authorization for expenditure of up to $3.5 million per month to maintain the operation until the Security Council took a decision on UNAVEM II. The request that was being submitted - subject to the concurrence of the Advisory Committee - was not a blank cheque, but temporary funding pending a political decision.

14. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Security Council, in its resolution 804 (1993), had decided to extend the mandate of UNAVEM II until 30 April 1993. The Security Council had also approved the Secretary-General proposals in document S/25140 to scale down UNAVEM II. The related preliminary estimates had been presented in document S/25140/Add.1. The Advisory Committee was now awaiting an updated report from the Secretary-General. The Committee had yet to discuss the estimates relating to the scaled-down Mission; there was no expenditure authorization for the period ending 30 April 1993, to which date the mandate of UNAVEM II had been extended by the Security Council.

15. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that it was not at all clear what procedure the Committee was intending to follow. His delegation, and probably others, would need to seek instructions before it could accede to the Chairman's suggestion. Perhaps another course of action could be found.

16. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) said that his delegation would welcome an indication from the Secretariat of how they proposed to fund the loans to the UNAVEM II account from the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund, since they represented a sizeable sum.

17. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that the commitment authority the Secretary-General was seeking from the General Assembly, subject to the concurrence of the Advisory Committee, would cover the period 1 March 1993 to 30 April 1993. The question asked by the representative of Australia related not just to the UNAVEM II operation but to others as well. He would therefore prefer to address the question in the context of the report on the establishment of the Peace-keeping Reserve Fund which had been submitted to the Fifth Committee.

18. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) asked whether the Secretariat intended to update document A/47/744 before or after 30 April 1993.

19. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that the Secretariat hoped to present a report on the financing of the operation before the end of April.

20. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) stressed that the amount requested was quite large. Since his Government would bear a larger share than many others and his

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

Government's accounts closed at the end of March, it was important to know the exact amount to be recommended by the Advisory Committee and when the letters of assessment would be sent to Governments. Unless the Secretariat could substantiate the figure of $3.5 million per month his delegation might have a hard time persuading the Government authorities to accept it. The problem with the course of action being suggested was that the Committee had no basis on which to take a decision. It was not known for instance, how much of the amount would actually be used. Had the proposal been put forward a few days previously and arrangements been made to brief delegations on the current status of the accounts for UNAVEM II and the status of contributions, States would have been in a position to determine the share they would be expected to bear. The Committee should revert to the matter later when it had more information.

21. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), replying to the query of the representative of Canada as to what option had been selected for UNAVEM II, said that three options had been specified in paragraph 30 of the Secretary-General's report (S/25140) and that the Security Council had endorsed option C, which entailed the concentration of UNAVEM II in Luanda. In his report on financial implications (S/25140/Add.1), option C had been costed at $940,000 a month, while Options A and B had been costed at $4,720,000 a month and $1,930,000 a month respectively.

22. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that on the basis of the information provided previously by the Secretariat and by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, his delegation had been willing to go along with a two-month extension at the proposed level of $3.5 million a month, but in view of the additional information provided by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, that amount now appeared to be in excess of what would be necessary to implement option C. Additional information was needed so that the Committee could have a more precise idea of what it was being asked to approve.

23. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that in the light of the Security Council's recommendation, his delegation had expected requirements for UNAVEM II to be on the order of $900,000 a month. His delegation was, therefore, dismayed that a much larger amount was now being requested. The Canadian Government would be reluctant to provide additional funds without any solid justification, especially in a period of serious financial constraints.

24. Mr. BAUDOT (Controller) said that the Secretariat would appreciate more time to provide the additional information requested by delegations.

AGENDA ITEM 121: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (continued)

25. The CHAIRMAN recalled that by decision 47/451 the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount of

(The Chairman)

$7,138,500 gross ($6,834,300 net) for the maintenance of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period ending 28 February 1993; had decided to provide that amount from the unencumbered balance of the appropriation provided for the Mission; and had deferred to the resumed forty-seventh session of the Assembly consideration of agenda item 121.

26. In the light of a recent decision by the Security Council concerning the implementation of the settlement plan regarding Western Sahara, the Committee was not in a position to consider the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/743). The matter could be taken up during the informal meetings planned for the following days.

AGENDA ITEM 119: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER GROUP IN CENTRAL AMERICA (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 122: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN EL SALVADOR (continued) (A/47/556, A/47/751 and A/47/900)

27. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the Committee had decided to consider items 119 and 122 together and that the General Assembly had, by decision 47/452, authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments up to the amount of $8,045,600 gross ($7,514,200 net) for the maintenance of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for the period ending 28 February 1993 and had deferred to the resumed forty-seventh session of the Assembly consideration of agenda item 122.

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that by resolution 791 (1992) the Security Council had extended the mandate of ONUSAL for a further period of six months ending on 31 May 1993. The Secretary-General had submitted estimates of $19,339,500 gross ($17,999,700 net) for ONUSAL in document A/47/751. The estimates had provided, inter alia, for 313 civilian personnel and 234 military personnel. As a result of the late submission of the report, the consideration of the estimates by the General Assembly had been postponed to a resumed session in the first quarter of 1992. In the meantime, an amount of $8,045,600 gross ($7,514,200 net) had been appropriated and assessed for the period ending 28 February 1993. In paragraph 83 of his report to the Security Council (S/24833), the Secretary-General indicated that the personnel requirements for the election process would be phased in as required and that it was anticipated that ONUSAL would complete its mission by mid-1994. The related report of ACABQ was contained in document A/47/900.

29. In considering the ONUSAL estimates, the Advisory Committee had taken into account the fact that the Security Council had terminated the mandate of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) effective 17 January 1992. However, appropriations for ONUCA had been approved and assessed for the period ending 30 April 1992. The Committee had been informed that $4.7 million gross ($4.6 million net) constituted an amount assessed on Member States for which there was no valid mandate.

(Mr. Mselle)

30. The ONUCA and ONUSAL accounts had been merged and the combined account reflected miscellaneous and interest income amounting to $4.6 million. There was also a large unencumbered balance of about $17.5 million in addition to $1.8 million representing the value of ONUCA-owned equipment in the United Nations Supply Depot.

31. The Advisory Committee had indicated a number of areas where the expenditure might not be fully needed as estimated by the Secretariat. Taking all those factors together, the Committee had recommended that an amount of $17.2 million gross ($16 million net) should be appropriated by the General Assembly for the period ending 31 May 1993.

32. For the reasons stated in paragraph 40 of its report, miscellaneous and interest income of $4.6 million would be credited to Member States. Taking into account the fact that $8,045,600 gross had already been appropriated and assessed on Member States, the Committee recommended an additional assessment of $4.6 million gross ($3.9 million net). For the period after 31 May 1993, the Committee recommended $2.9 million gross or $2.7 million net in commitment authority to the Secretary-General with the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. In view of the large amounts remaining to be collected from Member States, the Advisory Committee urged the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts to collect outstanding assessments for ONUCA and ONUSAL. As stated in paragraph 33 of its report, the Advisory Committee would take into account the outstanding assessments and the amount of $4.6 million assessed on Member States for ONUCA beyond 17 January 1992 before the Committee decided whether or not to authorize an additional assessment on Member States for the period after 31 May 1993.

33. Ms. RIGGELSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its States members, said that the European Community could support the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the General Assembly should appropriate an amount of $17.2 million gross ($16 million net) for ONUSAL for the period 1 December 1992 to 31 May 1993. With regard to the period after 31 May 1993, the European Community could support the recommendation that the Secretary-General should be given commitment authority in the amount of $2.9 million gross ($2.7 million net) per month for the period of the extension subject to the prior concurrence of the Advisory Committee, should the Security Council extend the mandate of ONUSAL.

34. In that context, States members of the European Community especially welcomed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the combined miscellaneous and interest income of $4.6 million should be credited to Member States against future assessments for ONUSAL. She reiterated the European Community's concern about the practice of retaining unencumbered balances and lamented the fact that it had not been discontinued. It was to be hoped that that situation would be rectified in the budget for the period after 31 May 1993 should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of

(Ms. Riggelsen, Denmark)

ONUSAL. Another point of principle which the European Community and its States members would like to see addressed regarding the future financing of the ONUCA/ONUSAL account was the question of the excess amount assessed for ONUCA, i.e., that part of the assessment relating to the month following the Security Council's decision to shorten the ONUCA mandate.

35. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) said that following the merger of the ONUCA and ONUSAL accounts, the credits to Member States that had already paid their full assessments for ONUCA should be offset against their assessments for ONUSAL. While his delegation was willing to agree that miscellaneous income of $4.6 million should be credited to the Members as a whole, it felt that those Members which had overpaid their assessments for ONUCA should receive a reduction in their share of the proposed amount of $3.9 million which remained to be assessed for ONUSAL.

36. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) referring to annex VI of document A/47/556 on ONUCA asked what the current unencumbered balance for that particular operation was. The figure of $12.9 million seemed more relevant than the unutilized balance of $4.7 million mentioned in the Advisory Committee's report (A/47/900, para. 30), since the former figure related to the entire length of the operation. Similarly, he wondered whether there had been any change in the amount of outstanding contributions to ONUCA ($12.7 million). An amount was outstanding of $3.7 million from the United States owing to the fact that his Government had been billed for ONUCA after the operation had been terminated by the Security Council and the fact that the Government had decided to use the limited funds available to it for peace-keeping to the two new operations launched in 1992 in Cambodia and Yugoslavia. He asked the Secretariat to explain why the voluntary contribution in kind valued at $1,563,000 had been shown as both income and expenditure especially since it appeared not to have any impact on the amount assessed on all Member States.

37. Turning to ONUSAL, he said that his delegation would appreciate having more time to examine the Advisory Committee's report in detail since at the past two sessions of the General Assembly, reports on ONUSAL had been submitted so late that it had been virtually impossible to give them the attention they deserved. Given the findings of the Advisory Committee, it was not surprising that the Secretariat had held off submitting its peace-keeping budgets until late in the session when few delegations would have had the opportunity to read the reports. His delegation hoped that the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee could revise the timetable for submission and consideration of the peace-keeping budgets and reports in order to give Member States more time to study the proposals and recommendations.

38. The Advisory Committee's report mentioned not only waste but also the Secretariat's disregard for many of the cost-saving measures that had been recommended in the past by ACABQ and approved by the General Assembly. In the United States, government officials who so wilfully failed to implement

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

legislative decisions would be jailed, dismissed or, at the very least, reprimanded. In the discussion of a code of conduct for United Nations staff, provisions should perhaps be considered for penalizing those Secretariat officials who failed to implement decisions of the General Assembly.

39. He would be grateful if the Chairman of ACABQ could inform the Fifth Committee what action the Advisory Committee could take to compel compliance and why it had not taken a more aggressive approach to the problem in the past. For example, in paragraph 15 of its report (A/47/900), the Advisory Committee stated that the Secretariat had failed to revise subsistence allowance rates for mission staff, despite the former's recommendation on the matter. Allowances throughout the system were generally much too high and his delegation would consider introducing a proposal, under another agenda item, to reduce them. He also noted the observation of ACABQ that remuneration levels for local staff were high in comparison with the average local salary scale. His delegation shared that view and intended to have the matter resolved under the appropriate agenda item.

40. In paragraph 19 of its report, ACABQ noted that excesses in budgeting for legal assistance and public information campaigns continued, despite its previous recommendations. It was disappointing to read that all the Advisory Committee could do was to reiterate its request that the Secretary-General should achieve maximum economy, which was obviously a meaningless appeal.

41. In paragraph 21, the Advisory Committee noted that the Organization continued to rent at considerable cost buildings and parking space for the peace-keeping operation. He wished to know what, if anything, the Government had contributed to the operation. That was not the only case in which a host Government had not met its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement for peace-keeping operations (A/45/594) and he wondered what the Secretariat was doing about the matter other than passing on unnecessary costs to all Member States.

42. His delegation was disappointed that, despite those serious problems, ACABQ could recommend only a reduction of about 10 per cent in the monthly commitment authority.

43. On the question of the merging of the accounts of ONUCA and ONUSAL, the General Assembly had agreed in principle to the merging but had not had an opportunity to discuss its modalities. The General Assembly's resolution on the operation must therefore include provisions to accomplish that objective.

44. His delegation wished to suggest, firstly, that the General Assembly should revise the appropriation for ONUCA to bring expenditure into line with income, thereby eliminating the unencumbered balance reported by the Secretary-General.

45. Secondly, the assessments of Member States should be adjusted to reflect the lower level of expenditures, as had been done in the case of UNTAG. Such

(Mr. Michalski, United States)

an adjustment would reduce arrears for some Member States and result in reimbursements for those States which had paid their contributions in full.

46. Thirdly, the credits and debits on the ONUCA account should be carried over in the ONUSAL account. Payments received from Member States in arrears would be credited in the first instance against ONUCA arrears. Such an arrangement would ensure that a higher percentage of outstanding assessments to ONUCA was collected and that those Member States which had fully met their obligations were not penalized.

47. Mr. DAMICO (Brazil) said that his delegation shared the concerns expressed by ACABQ, particularly those raised in paragraphs 23 to 28 of its report (A/47/900). The administration of peace-keeping operations, in which a delicate balance had to be maintained between the discharge of the mandate and the cost-effectiveness of the operation, was no easy task. Indeed, short-term economies might jeopardize the implementation of mandates and generate additional expenditures in the future. In that connection, the possible understaffing of different components of the peace-keeping operation was a matter of some concern, particularly since ONUSAL was committed to the creation of a national police force in El Salvador, a task that required the deployment of a large number of civilian police monitors.

48. His delegation supported the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, on the understanding that the amounts proposed for assessment would not result in keeping the staff level below what was required for the effective discharge of the mandate of ONUSAL.

49. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia), referring to the matter of unencumbered balances, said that the method used for dealing with the item in the Secretary-General's report (A/47/751) was inappropriate and differed from the practice followed for earlier accounts, such as that of UNTAG.

50. In his view, those countries that had paid in full should be credited and the credits posted to the combined accounts, while those that were in arrears should have their debits transferred to the combined accounts.

51. Furthermore, it was not clear from the report what the amount of the unencumbered balance was. His Government would prefer to see a credit in the combined account against future assessments and his delegation therefore favoured further discussion of the matter in informal sessions in order to clarify the approach being put forward.

52. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), referring to the questions of the unencumbered balance and the operating deficit in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/751), shared the view of the representative of Australia that the definition of unencumbered balance differed from previous definitions of the concept. The definition of terms dictated the outcome of discussions and the

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

Fifth Committee, in particular, must be careful not to change the definition of accounting terms.

53. The concept of operating deficit, for its part, was based on the existence of outstanding assessments. It was obvious that the Secretariat would propose, in every case, that any unencumbered balance should be retained. The Fifth Committee had agreed on the need for a peace-keeping reserve fund to assist in start-up operations. Even after operations were in place, however, they continued to rely on the reserve fund, pending the payment of assessed contributions. The Secretariat should therefore review its policy of funding peace-keeping operations in light of the establishment of the peace-keeping reserve fund and should put an end to the practice of retaining unencumbered balances on the ground that assessed contributions were still outstanding. In that connection, his delegation supported the views expressed by the European Economic Community on the matter.

54. With respect to the use of the peace-keeping reserve fund, the Secretary-General had reported that ONUSAL had borrowed the amount of $5 million from the peace-keeping reserve fund, while the report of ACABQ stated that only $2 million had been used to fill an operating deficit. He wondered what were the reasons for that discrepancy and hoped that the Secretary-General would seek to improve the method of disposing of the unencumbered balance and reduce the need for recourse to the peace-keeping reserve fund.

55. Mr. HOSANG (Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance), replying to questions raised by the United States delegation and touched upon by the delegation of Australia said that the Secretariat had provided additional information to the Advisory Committee which showed that, as at 31 December 1992, the unencumbered balance for ONUCA was $12,910,046, which represented an increase of $25,223 over the figure shown in annex V of document A/47/751.

56. On the question of outstanding assessments, at the end of February 1993, total assessments for ONUCA were $12,640,000, which meant that approximately $97,500 had been collected for ONUCA, thereby increasing the unutilized balance to approximately $250,000.

57. With respect to voluntary contributions under income, it had been pointed out that the same amount had been shown under expenditure. In that connection, the General Assembly had decided that whenever a budgeted item was contributed in kind, the appropriation would be decreased by the amount budgeted. The resources available to ONUCA had thus been increased by the addition of voluntary contributions in kind. Those resources were also shown as expenditure in accordance with the policy laid down by the General Assembly.

58. Mr. FRANCIS (Australia) requested that the list of questions to be answered by the Secretariat should include the question which he had asked

(Mr. Francis, Australia)

earlier, namely, why had the unencumbered balance for ONUCA been handled differently from the practice followed in other operations.

AGENDA ITEM 147: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Final appropriations for 1990-1991 (continued) (A/C.5/47/77)

59. The CHAIRMAN recalled that in its decision 47/453 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, had decided to accept the recommendation of ACABQ with regard to unliquidated obligations, and to revert to the question of the final appropriations for the biennium 1990-1991 at its resumed forty-seventh session.

60. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that an analysis of document A/C.5/46/46/Add.1 raised a number of questions with regard to the Secretariat's policy and practice in the matter of supernumeraries who, according to information provided by the Secretariat, were staff members not occupying posts. In at least 15 out of the 32 expenditure sections in the programme budget for the biennium 1990-1991 (A/C.5/46/46/Add.1), supernumeraries were attached to units at a total cost for the biennium of at least $9.5 million. The question of posts was a key issue in the General Assembly's decisions on new budgets. Where additional mandates were given, programme budget implications were provided and decisions on resources taken by the General Assembly. It would appear that supernumeraries were created by the Secretariat without the involvement of the General Assembly. That trend had consequences for the 1992-1993 budget, including the revised estimates. He would therefore be grateful if the Secretariat could provide clear answers, in writing, to a number of questions prior to consideration of the issue at the following resumed session.

61. He would welcome, first of all, an update of the information contained in document A/C.5/46/46/Add.1, including details of the list of posts, ranks of the incumbents, cost per post, and breakdown of incumbents by gender. He wished to know, furthermore, how many of the incumbents were retired or dismissed United Nations officials, and whether any had been employed as consultants before or after becoming supernumeraries.

62. Secondly, he wished to know the basis on which supernumeraries were recruited, since the staff rules contained no mention of them. If they were recruited for mandated activities, why were they not included in the programme budget implications and proposed for inclusion in the 1990-1991 budget when the latter was submitted or revised? If supernumeraries were involved in mandated activities, to whom were they answerable and by whom were they supervised? Did they supervise staff involved in mandated activities? If they were not recruited for mandated activities, then why were they recruited? What was the relationship between the work performed by supernumeraries and the activities of temporary assistants and consultants? Who determined hiring and why was provision made for separation costs for supernumeraries? What guidelines were applicable to them and could those guidelines be made available to the Fifth Committee?

(Mr. Spaans, Netherlands)

63. He also wished to know whether the Advisory Committee was kept informed of the practice and, if so, how.

64. With regard to the performance reports and revised estimates, he wondered why there had been no mention of supernumeraries in the first performance report. He would also welcome clarification of the Secretariat's statement that the availability of a large core of permanent staff enabled the Secretariat in New York to cope with sudden or expected changes in the calendar, in a body's meeting, or in documentation requirements, without significant additional cost. A number of supernumeraries appeared to be involved in precisely such activities.

65. He wished to know, further, how many supernumeraries had been continued in the 1992-1993 budget as well as their breakdown according to section, rank, cost, and gender. Why had they been continued, if indeed any had been? Had the same positions within sections been continued by other persons, and if so, why? He noted the omission of any reference to supernumeraries in a number of documents, including the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 (A/C.5/47/47). Were there any supernumeraries at the time of drafting or submission of the first report, and if so, why was there no mention of it. He also wondered whether there were any supernumeraries attached to the units or functions that were subject to restructuring or revised estimates, and if so, how many there were.

66. He wished to know, in conclusion, whether the practice still applied and whether the Secretariat proposed to continue its application in future.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

67. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the second revision of the programme of work for the current week and the tentative programme of work for the second part of the resumed session. The programme of work for 25 March to 2 April 1993 took account of the availability of the Secretary-General's report on the revised estimates. The English version of that document had been available to delegations since 5 March 1993, and the document would be issued in all languages on 12 March. The Bureau therefore suggested that the document should be introduced on 25 March. On 29 March, the Committee would have before it the report of ACABQ on the revised estimates.

68. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) proposed that the Committee should postpone its consideration of the programme of work for the second part of the resumed session until it had heard the briefing by the Special Adviser and Delegate of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates, which was to be held on Thursday afternoon, 11 March. By that time, the Advisory Committee might be able to inform the Committee when it would issue its report on the revised estimates.

69. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he was convinced that the tentative programme of work for the second part of the resumed forty-seventh session reflected the consensus of the Committee. While the Committee should remain flexible in implementing the proposed programme of work, it should not have to adjust its programme in order to accommodate a subsidiary body, since subsidiary bodies should not dictate the work of Main Committees.

70. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom. His delegation would not be in a position to consider the tentative programme of work for the second part of the resumed session until it had sufficient time to study the revised estimates.

71. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the Committee would need more time to consider the programme of work for the second part of its resumed session, and he proposed that the Committee should mandate the Chairman to consult with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, and also with representatives of the Bureau, in order to enable the Chairman of the Committee to present a proposal on the programme of work that did not set one body against another.

72. Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe) said that the question of the revised estimates was very important, and the Committee should not consider the item without the benefit of the ACABQ report on the subject.

73. Mr. FONTAINE (Cuba) supported the statement made by the representative of Ghana. Since the Secretary-General's report on the revised budget estimates contained financial implications, it would have to be considered in conjunction with the ACABQ report. His delegation was willing to accept any dates for the consideration of the revised estimates, provided that the Committee had before it all the relevant documents.

74. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that the Committee should begin its consideration of the revised estimates no later than 29 March even if the Advisory Committee had not completed its report on the revised estimates. Perhaps the Advisory Committee could submit a number of partial reports on the revised estimates in order to facilitate the Committee's consideration of the matter.

75. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that the Secretariat should indicate whether there would be any problems if the Committee took a decision on the revised estimates after 2 April 1993. The Committee might be able to meet the 2 April deadline if the Advisory Committee speeded up its work.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.